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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers releases national Recreation Strategy Plan

FORT WORTH - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a Recreation Strategic Plan on May 26 that seeks to transform and reposition the recreation program while maintaining USACE's role as a major federal, water-based recreation provider.

The USACE is the largest federal provider of outdoor recreation in the United States hosting 20 percent of the visits on two percent of the land. USACE hosts more than 370 million visits annually at its 422 lakes and river projects in 43 states. The Fort Worth District manages 25 lakes, with 314 recreation areas hosting over 25 million visits annually within the state of Texas. Visitation has steadily increased in recent years resulting in increased demands on USACE resources and facilities, and this upward trend is forecasted to continue. Conversely, recreation program budgets have steadily declined.

In support of the national strategy, the Fort Worth District plans to continue current initiatives while developing new, innovative ways to provide safe, quality, water-based recreation. Some of these initiatives include:

- Partner with other federal and state agencies as well as counties, cities, non-profit organizations, and economic development associations.
- Expand the volunteer program by increasing the opportunities for volunteers to support the delivery of recreation opportunities to the public.
- Seek additional recreation partners to help maintain and provide park areas and facilities.
- Work with local military installations to provide quality recreation to our armed forces personnel.
- Manage our natural resources toward sustainability – environmental principles, ecosystem-based changes.
- Identify under-utilized recreation areas to reduce resource expenditures, resulting in best and highest use of economic and natural resources.

These principles will allow USACE to continue to provide an environment for people to enjoy safe and accessible water-based recreational opportunities; protect valuable public land and waters resources; build healthy communities by engaging the public in outdoor activities; and become an attractive partner to collaborate with communities and stakeholders.

Despite continued and forecast long-term budget constraints, the Fort Worth District will continue to provide quality public outdoor recreation opportunities to serve the needs of present and future generations.

"We are proud of the long history of recreation services that USACE has provided to the public. In order to continue to do that in a quality manner in the future, we must be flexible and adaptable. This plan provides our managers, districts and regions the guidance to move in the right direction," said Michael G. Ensich, Chief, Operations & Regulatory Community of Practice, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

For more information on the USACE Recreation Strategic Plan visit <http://www.corpslakes.us/strategy>, or contact your local Lake Manager.

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